

Drowning in work? Mastering the art of delegation

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Delegation of authority is one of the modern trends being practiced by managers. Delegation is essentially legitimized power and this power refers to the ability to influence others effectively. **Delegating** is a skill that successful, effective leaders use to maximize the talent on their teams whilst also reducing their own workload and creating time for bigger tasks. As Greg Graves, former CEO of Burns & McDonnell, once said at a genKC “Grow to CEO” panel event, “If you’re not willing to delegate, welcome to mediocrity.” In spite of the fact that it liberates a manager, it doesn't free the person in question from the responsibility for the activities and choices of the individuals beneath him. That is the reason the manager needs qualified individuals underneath him so the activities or choices that are really made are along with the rules that are set up for the organization or association.

Delegation is crucial throughout all levels of an organisation.

1. On the corporate scale, it creates a knowledge inventory, increases the level of productivity and speed in finalizing tasks effectively.
2. On a managerial level, it alleviates functional burdens, gains employees' satisfaction and builds cooperation and trust between managers and employees giving a chance for the manager to have full-time for realization more important work.
3. On the level of an employee, it works on achieving functional empowerment, constructing alternative and administrative leadership, making employees feel self-confident and motivated to perform.
4. On the level of customer, it meets the needs of customers quickly, delivering or providing the service will not be delayed due to delegation authority.

Laura Lunsford, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Arizona, said that “Delegating is one of the more challenging aspects of leadership, and it actually gets harder to do the higher someone goes up the corporate ladder.” This is because most people know that work needs to get done, but they can't properly articulate what the end result should look like, so it's just easier to do it themselves. Executives also have difficulty giving up control, especially if they'll get blamed when something goes wrong. She also added that being a poor delegator can also affect you mentally, demotivate your team and hold up work for everyone else. It can lead to people feeling overwhelmed, anxious and unsatisfied with their jobs.

How to master the art of delegation

1. Clearly articulate the desired outcome. Work backward. Envisage the desired results and put them across in a way that is easy to understand.
2. Clearly identify constraints and boundaries. Define exactly what you expect the person you have delegated work to do. Should the person:

- Wait to be told what to do?
 - Ask what to do?
 - Recommend what should be done, and then act?
 - Act, and then report results immediately?
 - Initiate action, and then report periodically?
3. Where possible, include people in the delegation process. Empower them to decide what tasks are to be delegated to them and when.
 4. Match the amount of responsibility with the amount of authority. Remember that you are delegating responsibility and not accountability.
 5. Delegate to the lowest possible organizational level. Lower-level staff have a better understanding of the day to day running of an organisation and how to approach the situation. By delegating to them this increases workplace efficiency, and also helps to develop people.
 6. Provide adequate support, and be available to answer questions. Ensure the project's success through ongoing communication and monitoring as well as the provision of adequate and necessary resources.
 7. Focus on results. Allow the person to control his or her own methods and processes. This facilitates success and trust. As a manager, you should focus more on the results.
 8. Avoid "upward delegation." If there is a problem, don't allow the person to shift responsibility for the task back to you: ask for recommended solutions, and don't simply provide an answer.
 9. Build motivation and commitment. Provide recognition where deserved.
 10. Establish and maintain control.
 - Discuss timelines and deadlines.
 - Agree on a schedule of checkpoints at which you'll review project progress.
 - Make adjustments as necessary.
 - Take time to review all submitted work.

Studies have shown that 75 percent of employees actually want more responsibility. It is important, however, that this increased responsibility leads to something positive for them. The following are three delegation criteria that could be beneficial for employee development:

1. *Delegate assignments that he or she needs to strengthen special weaknesses.* By selecting the proper assignment to delegate, you can help a subordinate correct weakness and develop compensatory skills.
2. *Delegate a variety of duties to test your employee's versatility and add interest to his or her job.* Variety in a job makes it more interesting. Too many details can overburden and kill interest altogether, however, so add spice carefully.
3. *Delegate duties that could lead directly to promotion.* Everyone performs better when they know that their performance may lead to better things.

The process of delegation accomplishes two tasks that are essential to becoming a better manager. The first is that it gets your desk clear for you to perform more managerial and fewer clerical or routine tasks. Second, it creates an opportunity for you to interact with your employees on a less structured and routine basis. Delegation of authority is different than simply delegating work tasks because it involves empowering workers with the amount of authority they need to make decisions that impact their role.

